



H1N1 Provider Briefing

Date: September 16, 2009
To: All Healthcare Providers
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in RI

Local Influenza Activity Level: Sporadic¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island: 75 hospitalized to date, 3 deaths

National Report²: 42 states with 1,097 hospitalized cases, 168 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness): Rhode Island: 0.7%, Regional: 0.7%, National: 3.4

Provider enrollment for H1N1 vaccine

HEALTH has created an online enrollment, reporting and ordering system for providers who want to administer H1N1 vaccine. All providers are eligible to enroll in order to provide H1N1 vaccine to their patients. Enrollment has begun and will continue through Friday, September 25, 2009. So far, 257 providers have enrolled online. Providers who treat patients with chronic, underlying medical conditions are strongly encouraged to enroll so that patients who are at the highest risk for complications from H1N1 can be vaccinated. There is no cost to enroll and no obligation to order vaccine. To enroll in the H1N1 Vaccination Program, go to <http://pandemic.health.ri.gov/h1n1>. (Note that this is not a "www" address.) Providers who have questions about the enrollment process can contact Mark Francesconi at 222-5988 or Mark.Francesconi@health.ri.gov.

H1N1 vaccination venues for target populations

HEALTH will work through the following venues to administer the H1N1 vaccine to target groups this fall:

- Children aged 6 months to 5 years: pediatricians' offices
- Children grades K-12: school vaccination clinics
- Pregnant women: birthing hospitals, prenatal care providers' offices
- Household contacts and caregivers of infants younger than 6 months: providers' offices, public clinics
- Healthcare workers and first responders with direct patient contact: hospital-based (Healthcare Service Regions) clinics
- Young adults aged 19 to 24 years: college/university clinics, public clinics

Liability protection for H1N1 vaccine providers

The federal Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act provides protection from liability claims related to the administration or use of medical countermeasures during a public health emergency. The declaration of H1N1 as a nationwide emergency means that the PREP Act is currently in effect. On June 15, 2009, Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Secretary Kathleen Sebelius amended this declaration to include H1N1 influenza vaccines among the medical countermeasures covered by the PREP Act. As such, healthcare providers and others involved in the planning, distribution, and administration of H1N1 influenza vaccines are protected from injury claims related to H1N1 vaccine administration.

¹ The criteria for sporadic influenza activity include no increase in influenza-like illness activity and isolated confirmed cases of influenza or a confirmed outbreak in one institution.

² The CDC has developed a new web-based reporting system for influenza and pneumonia-associated hospitalizations and deaths. These numbers reflect the first week of data from this new system.

WASH HANDS/ALCOHOL GEL SNEEZE IN ARM STAY HOME WHEN SICK

On May 13, 2009, Governor Donald Carcieri also invoked the Civil Defense Preparedness Act (RIGL 30-15). This act provides tort liability immunity for people connected with H1N1 response efforts in Rhode Island, including H1N1 vaccine providers. HEALTH has issued a legal opinion on these two acts. To view the legal opinion, please see

<http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/LiabilityProtectionForIndividualsInvolvedInH1N1ResponseEfforts.pdf>.

Volunteers needed for H1N1 vaccination campaign

HEALTH is seeking volunteer assistance from licensed healthcare providers, primarily for school vaccination clinics, but also for other roles within the overall H1N1 influenza vaccination campaign. To volunteer, please register with [RI Responds](#), Rhode Island's healthcare volunteer program. Since September 10th, 135 volunteers have registered with RI Responds, bringing the program's total number of participants to 1,193 volunteers.

Physician consultation for prenatal care providers

Specific advice for providers regarding the need for testing or treatment of H1N1 in pregnant women can be accessed by calling Women and Infants' Hospital of Rhode Island (401-274-1100) and asking to have either the maternal fetal medicine physician or the obstetric medicine attending on call paged. This expert physician consultation will be able to provide guidance regarding antiviral treatment and facilitate influenza PCR testing.

New influenza and immunization pages on HEALTH's website

HEALTH has reorganized the influenza and immunization content on its website to make it easier for specific audiences to find the information they need. Information for providers regarding seasonal and H1N1 influenza is now located at www.health.ri.gov/flu/for/providers. Providers can also access H1N1 advisories, influenza surveillance reports, and past provider briefings at www.health.ri.gov/news/flu. Immunization information for providers is now located at www.health.ri.gov/immunization/for/providers. Providers can view news and advisories related to immunization at www.health.ri.gov/news/immunization.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>
- WHO at <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>